



**December 13, 2009**  
**27<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
**FEAST OF ST. ANDREW, HOLY AND ALL-PRAISED**  
**FIRST-CALLED OF THE APOSTLES**

**RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE TWO:**

When You did descend to death, O Life Immortal, You did slay hell with the splendor of Your Godhead! And when from the depths You did raise the dead, all the pow'rs of heaven cried out: O Giver of Life! Christ our God! Glory to You!

**HOLY APOSTLE ANDREW TROPARION - TONE FOUR:**

Andrew, first-called of the Apostles and brother of the foremost disciple, entreat the Master of all to grant peace to the world and to our souls great mercy.

**RESURRECTIONAL KONTAKION - TONE TWO:**

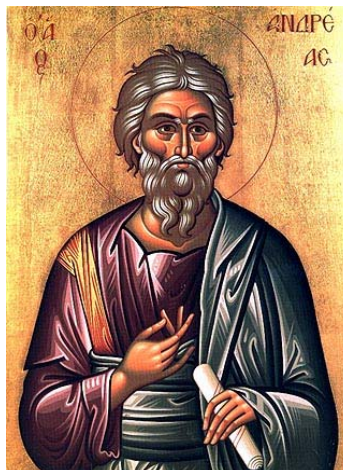
Hell became afraid, O Almighty Savior, seeing the miracle of Your Resurrection from the tomb! The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with You! And the world, O my Savior, praises You forever.

**HOLY APOSTLE ANDREW KONTAKION - TONE TWO:**

Let us praise Andrew, the herald of God, the namesake of courage, the first-called of the Savior's disciples and the brother of Peter. As he once called to his brother, he now cries out to us: "Come, for we have found the One whom the world desires!"

**HYMN TO THE MOTHER OF GOD - TONE SIX:**

Steadfast Protectress of Christians and constant advocate before the Creator, do not despise the cry of us sinners; but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you!



## **EPISTLE & COMMENTARY**

### **THE PROKIMENON IN THE 2<sup>ND</sup> TONE:**

*The Lord is my strength and my song! He has become my salvation!*

### **EPHESIANS 6: 10-17**

Brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

### **THE ALLELUIA VERSES: PSALM 20: 1, 9**

*The Lord answer you in the day of trouble! The name of the God of Jacob protect you! Save the king, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call!*

### **COMMENTARY**

Life is a struggle in this fallen world. Satan and all of his demons still have power in this world, at least until the Second Coming. When we put on Christ, in our baptism, we are called to participate in the Salvation of Christ throughout all of Creation. This participation is a continual battle in the spiritual war between good and evil. But do not fear: God has provided us with the very armor and weapons we need to fight the good fight! We are to be proactive in this battle; arming ourselves with the Belt of Truth, the Breastplate of Righteousness, the Shoes of the Gospel of Peace, the Shield of Faith, the Helmet of Salvation and the Sword of the Spirit—the Word of God.

Some may point out that armor, by its very nature, is reactive, rather than proactive...and if this were normal armor, they would be correct. However, the spiritual armor of the Lord is proactive by what we are called to do with it. The Truth of Christ is confrontational. There is no escaping the conflict present for the soul by the very nature of His Death and Resurrection as the Son of God. St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians further explicates this fact, as he calls Christ's Death on the Cross, "a stumbling block for the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks..." Righteousness can only be through the Grace of the Holy Spirit, made possible through Christ, leading back to that confrontational Belt of Truth. In fact, all of the Armor of God reflects the mystery of Our Lord's Death and Resurrection. All of this Armor reflects the Love of Christ that we, by putting on Christ, are called to bring to this world. May God grant us the strength to carry this armor, and allow us all to reflect Christ's sacrificial love to the world.

## GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

### **LUKE 13: 10-17**

At that time Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her: "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd: "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." The Lord then answered him and said: "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound - think of it - for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

### **COMMENTARY**

This explosive pericope brings to the forefront God's intention for humanity in this fallen world. Did God make man for the Sabbath, or the Sabbath for man? The Sabbath is a gift to humanity, allowing for a day of rest from the struggles of the hectic week. And yet, the ruler of the synagogue rebukes all for "work" being performed on the Sabbath. Many questions arise from his indignation. Is healing actually work? Or, why didn't she come to be healed on a different day? These questions all surround the minute, unimportant details of what had actually taken place!

Christ's actions allowed this woman, afflicted for ten and eight years (a representation of the perfection of God and the New Creation of the Eighth Day), to finally be at rest on the Sabbath. By healing her, she was able to use the Sabbath for its intention: praising God! Do we not approach the world in the same way as the ruler of the synagogue? We are caught up in the unimportant, man-made rules and regulations, and forget about the reason they were created in the first place! When we do things with love for God and love for our neighbor as the intention, we will not be limited by these unimportant, man-made obstructions. Then, we will be taking on the easy yoke of Christ!



## SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

**From *The Prologue* for Nov. 30/Dec. 13 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:**

### **The Holy Apostle Andrew the First-called**

Andrew, the son of Jonah and brother of Peter, was born in Bethsaida and was a fisherman by trade. At first he was a disciple of St. John the Baptist, but when St. John pointed to the Lord Jesus, saying, Behold the Lamb of God! (John 1:36), Andrew left his first teacher and followed Christ. Then, Andrew brought his brother Peter to the Lord. Following the descent of the Holy Spirit, it fell by lot to the first apostle of Christ, St. Andrew, to preach the Gospel in Byzantium and Thrace, then in the lands along the Danube and in Russia around the Black Sea, and finally in Epirus, Greece and the Peloponnese, where he suffered. In Byzantium, he appointed St. Stachys as its first bishop; in Kiev, he planted a Cross on a high place and prophesied a bright Christian future for the Russian people; throughout Thrace, Epirus, Greece and the Peloponnese, he converted multitudes of people to the Faith and ordained bishops and priests for them. In the city of Patras, he performed many miracles in the name of Christ, and won many over to the Lord. Among the new faithful were the brother and wife of the Proconsul Aegeates. Angered at this, Aegeates subjected St. Andrew to torture and then crucified him. While the apostle of Christ was still alive on the cross, he gave beneficial instructions to the Christians who had gathered around. The people wanted to take him down from the cross but he refused to let them. Then the apostle prayed to God and an extraordinary light encompassed him. This brilliant illumination lasted for half an hour, and when it disappeared, the apostle gave up his holy soul to God. Thus, the First-called Apostle, the first of the Twelve Great Apostles to know the Lord and follow Him, finished his earthly course. St. Andrew suffered for his Lord in the year 62. His relics were taken to Constantinople; his head was later taken to Rome, and one hand was taken to Moscow.

### **Saint Frumentius the Enlightener of Abyssinia**

In the time of Emperor Constantine the Great, a learned man from Tyre by the name of Meropius traveled to India. He took with him two young Christians, the brothers Edesius and Frumentius. On the journey, their boat was shipwrecked in a storm off the coast of Abyssinia, and the wild Abyssinians killed everyone on the boat except these two brothers. They lived in Abyssinia for several years, and managed to enter into service in the imperial court of the Abyssinian king. Frumentius began to preach the Christian Faith, initially very cautiously, and was convinced that this land would be fruitful for such preaching. The two brothers then took ship: Edesius to Tyre, to his parents, and Frumentius to Alexandria, to Patriarch Athanasius the Great. Frumentius explained the situation in Abyssinia to the Patriarch, and sought pastors for those newly converted to the Faith. St. Athanasius consecrated Frumentius to the episcopacy. St. Frumentius returned to Abyssinia where, by his zeal and his miracles, he converted all of Abyssinia to the Christian Faith in his own lifetime. This great shepherd of the flock of Christ, the enlightener of Abyssinia, reposed peacefully in the year 370 and went to live in the Kingdom of his Lord.

## HYMN OF PRAISE

The Holy Apostle Andrew the First-called  
St. Andrew, by the Spirit enlightened,  
And the First-called Apostle of Christ,  
Proclaimed the Lord day after day,  
And baptized the people with the Cross.  
Like a gardener in his own garden,  
Through village and town he walked,  
And skillfully grafted wild trees,  
Watering them with Living Water,  
Until he came to the end of his days,  
And saw the Cross awaiting him.  
Joyful Andrew said to the Cross:  
“Greetings, O Cross! God sanctified thee,  
Christ sanctified thee with His body.  
O Cross, be thou my resting place.  
From the dust of the earth, take me;  
To God in the highest, raise me up,  
And let Christ take me from thee—  
The very Christ Who, because of me, was crucified on thee.”  
Disciple of the holy Baptist,  
And apostle of Christ the Savior  
O Andrew, first-called star,  
By your prayers, help us.

## REFLECTION

St. John Chrysostom says: “All is given to the Apostles.” That is, all gifts, all power, all the fullness of grace which God gives to the faithful. We see this in the life of the great apostle, St. Andrew the First-called: He was an apostle, evangelist, prophet, pastor and teacher (Ephesians 4:11). As an evangelist, he carried the good news of the Gospel to the four corners of the earth; as a prophet, he prophesied the baptism of the Russian people and the greatness of Kiev as a city and a Christian center; as a pastor, he established and organized many churches; as a teacher, he tirelessly taught people right up to and during his crucifixion, when he taught from the cross until his last breath. In addition to this, he was a martyr, which is also according to the gift of the Holy Spirit, and is not given to everyone. And so we see in this apostle, as in the others, the fullness of the grace of the Spirit of God. And every great work that a follower of Christ performs must be ascribed to that grace. St. Frumentius testifies this to us. When he returned from Alexandria to Abyssinia as a consecrated bishop, he began to perform the greatest miracles, thus converting great masses of people to the Faith. Then the amazed king asked him: “So many years have you lived among us and never have we seen you perform such miracles. How is it that you do so now?” To this, the Blessed Frumentius replied to the emperor: “This is not my work, but the work of the grace of the priesthood.” The saint then explained to the king how he had forsaken parents and marriage and the whole world for the sake of Christ, and how he had—by the laying on of hands by St. Athanasius—received the grace of the priesthood: miracle-working grace.

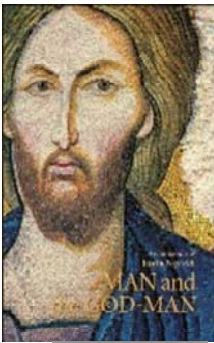
## **IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**



### ***2010 Wall Calendar***

The Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Western America is pleased to announce the publication of a beautiful, full-color, trilingual (English, Serbian and Greek) Wall Calendar, which has been compiled and designed by Bishop Maxim, and printed in Serbia. This high quality Calendar is adorned with striking full-color icons by Fr. Stamatis Skliris, a parish priest in Athens who is renowned as an iconographer and as a writer and lecturer on Byzantine iconography. Highly recommended! 27 pages.

*Retail price: \$20.00*

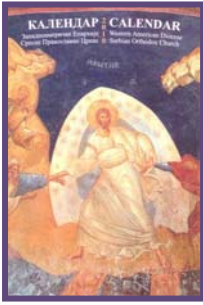


### **MAN AND THE GOD-MAN by Archimandrite Justin Popovic**

*Retail Price: \$15.00*

"Father Justin Popovich, pan-orthodox witness to the God-revealed and Christ-given Eternal Truth, whose testimony can be even seen within this collection of his articles - that "the mystery of Truth is not in material things, not in ideas, not in symbols, but in Personhood, namely the Theanthropic Person of the Lord Christ, Who said: I am the Truth (John 14:6), Truth perfect, never diminished, always one and the same in its complete fullness - yesterday, today, and forever (Heb.13:8)."

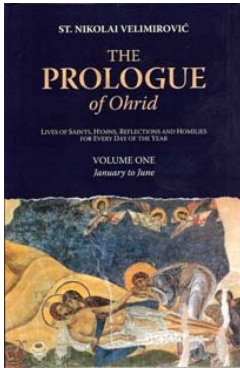
The treasure to be found in this anthology of neopatristic syntheses consists of: "Perfect God and perfect man" - Nativity Epistle, where Fr Justin boldly exclaim that "man is only a true man when he is completely united with God, only and solely in God is man a man, true man, perfect man, a man in whom all the fullness of Godhead lives."; "The God-man" - The foundation of the Truth of Orthodoxy - Ava Justinian language of love in Christ-centered reflections of Truth; "The Supreme Value and Infallible Criterion"- contemporary philosophical reflections on visible and invisible realities; "Sentenced to Immortality" - a homily on the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ; "Humanistic and Theanthropic Culture"-criticism of European anti-Christian culture; "Humanistic and Theanthropic Education" - indicative pondering of consequences of education without God.. ; "The Theory of Knowledge of Saint Isaac the Syrian" - Faith, prayer, love, humility, grace and freedom, the purification of the intellect, mystery of knowledge; "A Deer in a Lost Paradise" - Ava's renowned poetic essay, a confession, and deepest longing for all-sweetest Jesus...



### **2010 POCKET DIOCESAN CALENDARS NOW AVAILABLE**

Be sure to watch for your order in the mail. If you have not already received them, you will shortly! Contact the Diocesan office if you have any questions.

*Retail Price: \$5.00*



### **THE PROLOGUE OF OHRID**

St Nikolai of Zica (Velimirovic) (1880-1956) has been called the "Serbian Chrysostom" for his theological depth and golden-tongued eloquence. Now for the first time, a complete and unabridged English translation of St. Nikolai's Prologue of Ohrid has been made available. St. Nikolai's Prologue has become a much-loved spiritual classic for Orthodox Christians worldwide. An inspirational source-book of the Orthodox Faith, it contains within its pages a summation of the Church's wisdom and Her experience of sanctity through the Grace of Jesus Christ. Lives of Saints, Hymns, Reflections and Homilies are

presented for every day of the year. St. Nikolai's beautiful Hymns have never before appeared in English. – *Retail \$120 per set*

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### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

#### **ANNUAL DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY – Friday, January 29, 2010**

*Visit us online at [www.westsrbdio.org/assembly](http://www.westsrbdio.org/assembly)*

The Annual Diocesan Assembly will be a one day event this year and will be held at the Saint Simeon Serbian Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, Nevada on **Friday, January 29, 2010.**

#### **Annual Clergy Seminar – Annual KSS Meeting – Annual Diocesan Council Meeting**

*The Clergy Seminary and the Annual KSS Meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 28, 2010** beginning with lunch at 1pm at the Saint Simeon Serbian Orthodox Church.*

*The Diocesan Council Meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 28, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Saint Simeon Serbian Orthodox Church.*